Visit of Woman Delegation to Pakistan

4919. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a team of 40 women, forming a civilian delegation, visited Pakistan in March this year and met the military ruler and other in Pakistan Government;

(b) if so, whether the civilian delegation has submitted any report to Government on retrun from the visit; and

(c) if so, what are their main observations and suggestions for improving Indo-Pak relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) A women's delegation belonging to "Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia" paid a week-long visit to Pakistan in the last week of March, 2000. This was an entirely private initiative on the part of the organisation. The delegates included members of the National Commission for Women, social activists, educationists, artists, media personalities and students. During their stay, they met representatives of the Press and local NGO's. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, hosted a lunch for them in Islamabad. A seven-member team from the delegation also made a call on General Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad.

Amongst the Pakistani organisations, with which the delegation interacted during their stay, were the Pakistan-India People's Forum, Aurat Foundation, Democratic Commission for Human Development and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. They also participated in the "Indo-Pak Women Solidarity Conference" which was organised by a Pakistani daily newspaper and the Heinrich Boell Foundation. They also participated in a dialogue organised by the Democratic Commission for Human Development.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.